(d) if so, the terms and conditions laid down for such procurement?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The Russian Deputy Prime Minister visited India during 14—16 October 2001. No agreement was signed during the visit.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

VRS to Army Officers

2453. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minsiter of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to offer VRS to army officers;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when Government are going to implement the VRS for the officers?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Shortage of Officers in Army

2454. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a shortage of about one-third of sanctioned strength of officers of the rank of Major, Captain and others inspite of the fact that women are being inducted in the Army;

(b) whether one of the reason for many not coming forward to join the officers cadre is laying a great emphasis on fluency of English language; and

(c) if so, whether Government would consider to do away with the language criteria?